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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BUTTERFIELD).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 18, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable G.K. BUTTERFIELD to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Reverend George E. Battle, Bishop, North Eastern Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Charlotte, North Carolina, offered the following prayer:

God, we thank You for this wonderful day and this historic occasion. Thank You for our wonderful Nation and all those who represent us in the Congress of the United States of America.

You continually give us the opportunity to start anew so we celebrate this magnificent collection of leaders who will help pilot this Nation. Please give our Congress the wisdom to do what is right and not be driven by what is expedient. Give them the discretion to not be threatened by wise counsel or constructive criticism.

In the face of this magnificent occasion, God, continue to not only endow and bolster our Representatives, but give us the understanding to know that we play a crucial part in whether or not our leadership will be successful.

Bless the brave men and women of our armed services and their families. God bless America, her leaders and her people. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill and a concurrent resolution of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 1541. An act to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, and for other purposes.

H. Con. Res. 39. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the District of Columbia Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills and agreed to joint resolutions of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 303. An act to reauthorize and improve the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999.

S. 620. An act to repeal the provision of law that provides automatic pay adjustments for Members of Congress.

S.J. Res. 8. Joint Resolution providing for the appointment of David M. Rubenstein as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

S.J. Res. 9. Joint Resolution providing for the appointment of France A. Cordova as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

WELCOMING BISHOP GEORGE E. BATTLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged today to welcome and say words of welcome on behalf of the House to the wonderful bishop and minister who delivered our prayer for us this morning, whom I am privileged to have as a constituent in my congressional district.

He is not only a leader in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church but has been a leader in our community of Charlotte, North Carolina, and in our State for a number of years. He has served on our school board, he has been a corporate leader serving on boards of distinction, and he is an outstanding family man as well as, of course, a religious leader of our community.

We are delighted to welcome Bishop Battle today, and wish him well. His wife is just recovering from surgery, and we wish her well also on behalf of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

MORNING IN AMERICA BRINGS NEW COURSE OF ACTION

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Good morning, everybody; good morning, America. How are you? I am showing my age a little bit.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is always great to be an American, and it is always a great time in America because we have hope and vision for the future, and I am happy to report to you that Congress and the Obama administration have departed on a new course of action—no more voodoo economics, no more trickle-down economics. These are failed policies, and it is time for something new.

Whenever something new is on the table, there are always those who, instead of appreciating being Americans, they complain and don't add anything positive to the discussion.

But despite the obstacles that we confront, we will continue down this road. And, indeed, America will continue to experience morning in America.

AIG, BONUSES, AND THE FRENCH

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, AIG took bailout money and then gave millions to executives in bonuses. Now Congress is bent out of shape about it, and rightfully so. But the truth is in the last stimulus bill that Congress quickly passed with little or no debate was an attached amendment to allow AIG to do exactly what they did—give out high-dollar bonuses.

Congress is responsible for this irresponsible spending and must deal with the consequences. To make matters worse, AIG gave bailout money to foreign banks, like in France. The French are the same people who vilify the United States, blame the world's problems on us, and have a disdain for everything American.

Mr. Speaker, I think the U.S. has bailed out France enough. We helped save France in World War I, saved them again in World War II, and took over in Vietnam after they failed there—but with little or no gratitude from the French.

And AIG also gave billions to German and English banks. We can't afford to give away taxpayer money and reward failure while making working Americans pay for all of this nonsense. "No" to more bailouts, foreign or domestic.

And that's just the way it is.

BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK

(Mr. SESTAK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to say a few words about Brain Awareness Week. This is the week that the Society of Neuroscience members spread throughout America to speak about the exciting wonders of the mind. But in addition, like up in my district at

Franklin Institute, they will speak about not only neuroscience, but how do we take care of those patients who suffer damage.

I speak about this because as a veteran, as the Pentagon announced early this month, 360,000 of those 1.8 million members of our society who went to Iraq or Afghanistan have returned with a brain injury. The vast majority of them have healed and will heal, except for about 90,000 who will have lasting damage. That's why this week is so important. While we have a tendency to take care of these patients, there is much more to be done in the treatment of their damage with the discovery of neurostem cells and the possibility of stem transplants to repair the damage.

Again, I commend the Society of Neuroscience, particularly in this area of our returning veterans to help them improve their quality of life.

BUDGET TAXES TOO MUCH

(Mr. FLEMING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, this is budget time again, and this budget proposed by the administration has some very major flaws in it. It creates a greater tax burden on the American people, among other things. The budget calls for a \$637 billion tax increase for the majority of small businesses that pay taxes as individuals.

The cap-and-trade but cap-and-tax program, will increase taxes conservatively by \$646 billion on energy to every household in America. These households can expect to pay more than \$3,000 a year extra on their utility bills. This is money taken directly out of the pockets of working families struggling to pay bills each month.

This budget also caps the value of itemized deductions for those with higher incomes and really middle-class incomes, reducing charitable giving by \$9 billion a year which will devastate charities.

Finally, this budget reinstates the death tax which has been found to lower overall employment by \$1.5 million.

This budget spends too much, wastes too much, and taxes too much.

NOT SO FAST ON THE AIG BONUSES

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, not quite so fast on the AIG bonuses. The weasels who drove that company into the ground may not even be entitled to the bonuses in their contract based on their performance. And a failed company rescued from bankruptcy by the United States Government may not be obligated to pay them anyway.

Thankfully, there is also the power of the tax code. Let's return to the Eisen-

hower tax rates of 90 percent for people who receive bonuses from companies that we already own 50 percent or more of with taxpayer money.

For years the tax code around here has been tortured to reward people who need tax cuts absolutely the least. Hopefully we can use it this time to impose a little tax justice.

WHERE DOES ALL OF THE MONEY COME FROM?

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, one of my constituents recently said to me, "I'm tired of the government spending money I have not made yet for programs I don't want." And my constituents are right on this.

On top of the trillions that have already been spent, the President's budget is proposing doubling Federal spending by the year 2019. My constituents are saying, "How are we going to pay for this?"

Well, as we have heard this morning, there is the tax-and-cap scheme which is \$646 billion and is going to cost every American family an additional \$3,128 per year out of their household budget.

There is also the small-business taxes, \$637 billion of new small-business taxes. It is going to wipe out any kind of tax reduction that would have gone to the 95 percent of working Americans.

So the question becomes: Where does all of this money come from? Well, we know that the Democrat leadership is going to borrow too much, they are going to tax too much, and they are going to spend too much of the taxpayers' money.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. ALTMIRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, with passage of the long-overdue SCHIP bill, Congress and the President expanded health care coverage to 4 million American children who were previously uncovered. This single step did more to improve our health care system in one day than we had seen in 8 years. But there is still more to be done.

Every individual, every family, and every business in America struggles every day with health care costs. Their inability to afford coverage and the increased cost for goods and services as a result of health care costs for their business, this issue affects everybody in every way.

But for the first time, the President and Congress plan to consider health care reform as part of the budget process so we can accurately account for the true costs of doing health care reform and of not doing health care reform, which would be the price of inaction.